

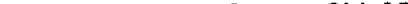
SIP Cover Sheet

California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

County Contact Person for County System Improvement Plan

Name:	Janice Maddox
Title:	Assistant Director, Sierra County Human Services
Address:	P.O. Box 1019 Loyalton, CA 96118
Phone/Email	(530) 993-6709
Submitted by each agency for the children under its care	
Submitted by:	County Child Welfare Agency Director (Lead Agency)
Name:	Carol Roberts

Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

Submitted by:	County Chief Probation Officer
Name:	Jeff Bosworth
Signature:	

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Sierra County

Draft System Improvement Plan (SIP) Update

Revised
June 15, 2009

I. OVERVIEW

Sierra County's Child Welfare Services has undergone significant transition in the past year. The Social Work supervisor has retired and her position has not yet been filled, although the recruitment to fill that position is continuing. Additionally, there has been transition in the leadership of the Department of Probation. The former Director left to accept an opportunity elsewhere, and her position has not yet been filled.

The vacant Social Work supervisor position has provided the opportunity for the Assistant Director of Human Services to provide direct supervision of Child Welfare Services and to become more aware on an in-depth level of the day-to-day operations of CWS.

In the context of this System Improvement Plan (SIP) Update, there has been a review of each of the SIP items from the plan submitted in March of 2008. SIP updates have been noted as well as new improvement goals for the upcoming year.

Local stakeholders and agency partners have continued to be involved in Sierra County SIP activities during the past year through community meetings and inter-agency collaboration.

The data reviewed for this update was taken from CWS Outcomes System Summary data published in January of 2009. This data was extracted during the second quarter of 2008.

CWS Outcome System Summary data published in January of 2009 show the following outcomes for Sierra County:

1. Recurrence rates of maltreatment decreased as compared to data published in October of 2008.
2. There was a 67.5% decrease in median time to reunification (Exit Cohort).
3. All initial entries were into foster care. There were no relative placements, or court-ordered family maintenance cases.
4. The Placement Stability for those in care from 8 days to 12 months increased.
5. The Placement Stability rate for those in care from 12 to 24 months decreased. The stability rate for this group published in January of 2009 is 33.3 compared to a national standard of 65.4.

This data represents a numerator of one (1) and a denominator of three (3). The low rate is due to one child's placement and the circumstances resulting in a change of placement was one that could not have been predicted or avoided through program planning.

6. Timely response compliance increase to 100% from 88.2% for immediate in-person investigations, and to 100% from 92.6% for 10-day investigations.
7. Timeliness of social worker visits improved from data published in October, 2009, and Sierra County achieved 100% compliance in most categories.

Other changes include the following:

1. Since March 2008, Safe Measures has been increasingly used as a case management and monitoring tool by social workers and supervisors.
2. The 2007-2008 Child Welfare Outcome Improvement Planning (CWOIP) funding was used to fund services related to safety (Differential Response), and well-being.
3. There is an increase in court-ordered Family Maintenance cases as a point-of-entry into services.

II. CWOIP EXPENDITURES

The 2008 – 2009 CWOIP allocation is being expended on Differential Response. Specifically, a Staff Analyst position has been hired with CWOIP funds. This position is housed in the local Family Resource Center, which is a crucial and historically struggling Community Based Organization (CBO).

So far, the following improvements have been made:

1. Improved documentation and tracking of CBCAP/CAPIT/PSSF expenditures and outcomes.
2. Increased hours of family support and counseling services available through the resource center.
3. Parenting classes are now being offered to the community-at-large.
4. Sustainable funding sources for local community-based organizations are being sought.
5. Increased collaboration among Community Based Organizations and Sierra County Child Welfare Services.

It is hoped that services will continue to be expanded through the Family Resource Center.

III. SIP OUTCOME TEMPLATES

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Outcome/Systemic Factor 1

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Outcome Measure S1.1 No Recurrence Of Maltreatment

County's Current Performance:

During the time period reviewed Sierra County's performance was 71.4 (the national standard is 94.6)

UPDATE: Sierra County's performance in recently published data was 88.2%. Sierra County has experienced significant transition in their Child Welfare System and in Probation. There is a new Social Worker Supervisor, a new Probation Chief and two social workers with significantly changed/new responsibilities due to the transitioning out of the lead Child Welfare Services worker. Additionally, the Deputy Director of Social Services retired and her position is not being filled. The need for renewed training pertaining to Structured Decision Making is written into the current Sierra County Training Plan. The new Social Services Supervisor will be fully trained in all aspects of SDM in order to adequately supervise utilization of the program by social workers. The two social workers who have taken on Child Welfare Services caseload have had training in SDM. There was one on-site SDM training in 2008-2009. Sierra County is in the process of putting policies and procedures into writing and use of SDM is being incorporated into these policies and procedures.

Improvement Goal 1.0

Full Utilization of Structured Decision Making (SDM)

Strategy 1. 1 All CWS social workers will demonstrate knowledge of how to fully utilize all components of Structured Decision Making (SDM)

Strategy Rationale¹ During a recent review it was confirmed that Structured Decision Making is not being fully utilized in Sierra County. Full utilization of SDM will assure that social worker decisions full take into consideration and address all risk factors for each family in a standardized fashion during case planning and court reviews, in addition to initial response. The implementation of best practice related to ongoing assessment throughout intervention and service provision periods should result in a significant decrease in the risk of recurrence of maltreatment.

Milestone	Timeline	Assigned to
1.1.1 Full utilization of SDM for all CPS referrals	Pending/revisited due to agency transition.	All social workers

¹ Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome area.

Milestone	Timeline	Strategy Rationale	Assigned to
1.1.2 Completion of SDM components for six month review periods for all CPS cases prior to creation of the client Case Plan (SDM will be referenced in all Case Plans).	6/31/2009	All social workers	
Pending			
Strategy 1.2 Development of a Quality Assurance procedure to assure full utilization of SDM			
1.2.1. Meet with key staff members to develop a QA plan for SDM	8/31/2008 8/31/2009	Incomplete: Sierra County has recently undergone the transitioning out of Social Services Deputy Director, the Social Worker Supervisors, and the Social Worker with primary responsibility for Child Welfare Services. A new Social Services Supervisor has been hired and weekly meetings specifically to address this and other needs for written policies and procedures have been scheduled as standing meetings that are recurring.	Deputy Director, Social Services Assistant Director, Human Services
1.2.2 A written Quality Assurance policy and procedure which includes statements regarding when QA reviews occur, who is responsible and how information is disseminated.	12/31/2008 12/31/2009	Incomplete: Sierra County has recently undergone the transitioning out of Social Services Deputy Director, the Social Worker Supervisors, and the Social Worker with primary responsibility for Child Welfare Services. A new Social	Deputy Director, Social Services Social Worker Supervisor

	Services Supervisor has been hired and weekly meetings specifically to address this and other needs for written policies and procedures have been scheduled as standing meetings that are recurring.		
1.2.3	<p>Quarterly reports of utilization of SDM for all CPS cases for the period are provided to the Assistant Director of Human Services on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Pending. The Social Worker Supervisor and the Assistant Director of Human Services are meeting regularly, but a system has not yet been developed for submission of formal reports. The new supervisor is very computer literate and will receive training on SDM within her first ninety days of hire. The new supervisor is also a systems thinker with excellent follow-through.</p>	<p>6/31/2009</p> <p>8/31/2009</p>	<p>Deputy Director, Social Services Social Worker Supervisor</p>

Strategy 1.3 Meet with key court staff to discuss utilization of SDM as a necessary component of court documentation and case planning.	Strategy Rationale Court awareness of the utilization and requirements of SDM will assure that the court has an understanding of the rationale used in decision making/case planning, and will assist in assuring that SDM is a component of court proceedings and outcomes. This will assist in further assuring that SDM is appropriately used in court mandates and outcomes, with the ultimate result of decreasing recurrence of maltreatment.
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Milestone	Timeline	Assigned to
1.3.1 Meeting scheduled with key court staff and social services staff (Presiding judge, attorneys, court support staff, etc.) Complete – See above – However, this will be revisited so that the recently hired Probation Chief will be fully informed.	6/31/2009	Assistant Director, Human Services
1.3.2 Based on outcomes of Milestone 1.3.1 above, review court procedures to assure compatibility with Structured Decision Making (SDM) protocol. Ongoing – See above	12/31/2009	Deputy Director, Social Services Assistant Director, Human Services
1.3.3 With court consent, revise procedures/protocol for communicating with the court as needed. If no changes are needed, submit a written report outlining ways the protocol supports court awareness of SDM assessment. Pending – See above	6/28/2009	Deputy Director, Social Services Assistant Director, Human Services
Improvement Goal 2.0 All social services staff will demonstrate extensive awareness of risk assessment and response indicators for CWS.		Strategy Rationale Annual training will facilitate discussion of scenarios and risk factors. In conjunction with full utilization of SDM, this will assure staff has the tools and reminders needed to fully assess situations. The knowledge base of staff will remain current and will incorporate current research.
Strategy 2.1 All social services staff will participate in annual in-service training on identifying risk factors of abuse, neglect and endangerment both during an initial assessment and as part of the case review/case planning process. This initial training is going to be an in-house round-table training utilizing existing resources. Additionally, An all-day training on Intimate Family Violence facilitated by Elaine Whitefeather has been scheduled for October 16, 2009. Other community entities including law		

	enforcement are invited to this and other trainings.		
	3.1.1 Identify the trainer and venue for the annual training. Complete – See above.	2/30/2009 4/28/2009	Education and Training Coordinator Assistant Director, Human Services
	3.1.2 First annual training scheduled. Complete – See above.	4/28/2009	Education and Training Coordinator Assistant Director, Human Services
	3.1.3 Completion of Training Pending – See above.	9/30/2009	All social services staff
	Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.		
Milestone	None noted.		
Timeline			
Assigned to			

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Aside from training listed above, more training on SDM may need to be provided to staff, and technical assistance may be needed in this area.

Additionally, Strategy 2.1 requires annual in-service training on risk factors for abuse, neglect and endangerment.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

Strategy 1.3 above will involve partnership with the local court system. Training may involve collaboration with the Children's Research Center (CRC) branch of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) and The Center for Human Services, UC Davis Extension, University of California.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

None

Outcome/Systemic Factor 2

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Outcome Measure 4B: Least Restrictive (Entries First Placement.: Relative)

County's Current Performance:

During the time period reviewed no children in custody were placed with relatives.

UPDATE: 100% of entries were with a foster family in the most recent published data. Relatives are the first placement of choice and each case is being evaluated as to the existence of viable relative placements. This requirements is being incorporated into written policies and procedures. The staff transition within the agency is an opportunity to revisit all policies.

Improvement Goal 1.0 Increase the number of children placed with relatives as an initial placement.

Milestone	Strategy	Rationale ²	Timeline	Assigned to
1.1.1	Verification from CDSS regarding the circumstances where a child may be placed with a relative pending approval of the home.	Creation of a policy and procedure which clearly defines when children can be placed with relatives, during an emergency response.	6/30/2009	Deputy Director, Social Services Assistant Director, Human Services

² Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome area.

Strategy	Strategy Rationale	Timeline	Milestone	Assigned to
1.1.2 Written Policies and Procedures in place for initial placement of children. Pending – Weekly recurring meetings have been scheduled with the new Social Services and written policies and procedures will be implemented on a weekly basis.	<p>Strategy 1.2</p> <p>Creation of a policy and procedure which standardizes to the greatest extent possible when placement with relatives is deemed to be unviable as an option for placement and circumstances under which relative placement can be approved during an emergency rep</p>	<p>This will assist social workers in navigating the issue of needing to place a child in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), in the context of acting in the child's best interest.</p>	<p>12/31/2008</p>	<p>Deputy Director</p>
	<p>1.2.1. Scheduling of an initial staff meeting to discuss parameters to be included in this policy and procedure.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>10/31/2009</p>	<p>Deputy Director</p>
	<p>1.2.2 Draft Policy and procedure complete</p>	<p>Policies and Procedures are being completed for all components of Sierra County CWS through partnership with the recently hired Social Worker Supervisor. This is in progress. Written policies and procedures are finalized on a weekly basis with full completion expected at this time by 10/31/2009.</p>	<p>10/31/2009</p>	<p>Deputy Director</p>
	<p>1.2.4 Final policy and procedure complete and implemented</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p>10/31/2009</p>	<p>Deputy Director</p>
				<p>Assistant Director, Human Services</p>

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

None Noted.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Technical Assistance for clarifying the parameters of relative placement and balancing the need to place in the Least Restrictive Environment with wanting an optimal situation for the child. Technical assistance has been provided.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

The Center for Human Services, UC Davis Extension, University of California can provide technical assistance to staff on this issue and inservice training as needed.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

None

Outcome/Systemic Factor 3

Outcome/Systemic Factor: System Factor: Lack of compliance with Full Utilization requirements for CWS/CMS

County's Current Performance: Sierra County has consistently been out of compliance with the Full Utilization requirement of CWS/CMS.

UPDATE: Sierra County Child Welfare Services recently experienced significant transition due to the departure of the Deputy Director of Social Services, the Social Worker Supervisor and the lead Child Welfare Services Social Worker. While Sierra County is meeting the letter of Full Utilization at this time and meets official utilization requirements, the CWS/CMS system can be more fully utilized and this is the current goal. As policies and procedures are being reviewed and written, the utilization of CWS/CMS is being incorporated at every step.

Improvement Goal 1.0 Implementation of a system to monitor compliance with Full Utilization of CWS/CMS at the county level.

Strategy 1.1 Implement Safe Measures in Sierra County

Milestone	Timeline	Assigned to
1.1.1 Contract in place with the Children's Research Center (CRC) branch of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) for use of Safe Measures in Sierra County. This contract has gone before Sierra County Board of Supervisors and will be in place July 1, 2009.	7/1/2009	Assistant Director, Human Services
1.1.2 Staff trained in use of Safe Measures	11/28/2008	Assistant Director, Human Services
Complete		
1.1.3 Safe Measures data is collected monthly on a routine basis (by the 5 th day of every month) Complete – This is currently happening through trial access to Safe Measures pending purchase of the service starting July 1, 2009.	6/15/2009	Assigned Social Worker Social Worker Supervisor
1.1.4 Sierra County is 100% in compliance with Full Utilization requirements. Complete – with the caveat that Sierra County wishes to better utilize CWS/CMS and is incorporating continued improvement into written policies and procedures.	1/5/2008	All social workers

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

³ Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome area.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Social Services may need technical assistance if through implementation of Safe Measures if it is discovered there is a consistent error in CWS/CMS data input that the county is unable to rectify without CDSS assistance.

This has not been an issue

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

CDSS reports will be utilized as confirmation that Full Utilization is being met.